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Branding Lab

HOW PORTUGUESE CONSUMERS PERCEIVE THE SUSTAINABLE DIMENSION OF THE BRAND GARNIER?

*Report C: How to Communicate to consumers that a product with plastic
packaging can be sustainable?*

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1. Introduction

Plastics have been at the center of the conversation of sustainability (Mckinsey, 2020) since they are the most common materials in the modern economy due to their extensive functionality and low cost. Despite their desirable qualities, plastics have a linear "take-make-dispose" value chain with significant economic and environmental disadvantages in the short term, and long term since most plastic materials end up as waste (Shivsharan, 2014). Businesses and governments globally are beginning to see the need to address the challenges and concerns arising from the global plastic system.

The mass-market beauty and personal care market is one such industry that has had to rethink its position in the use of plastics, particularly in packaging. Brands are now reducing packaging waste, using recyclable materials in packaging, and getting rid of harmful chemicals in their packaging. More than ever, brands need to know how to communicate their sustainability efforts, as consumers have begun to consider this aspect in their purchasing decisions (MDS, 2019).

By analyzing our data retrieved from our research, it was possible to infer that sustainability was often a synonym for sustainable packaging for most of our respondents. One respondent stated: "To be truthful, I don't know if they do anything sustainable, what I do know is that all of their products are packaged using plastic." (Innovator segment, Category 3, n°4). Our quantitative questionnaire's data confirmed this insight, with 53,7% of respondents agreeing with the statement: "For me, Sustainability is a synonym of sustainable packaging." According to the quantitative questionnaire, 87.62% of respondents stated that recycled plastic packaging was important. In addition to this, 93.62% of respondents affirmed that recyclable packaging was important. These answers indicate that the conversation and

perception regarding sustainability start with the plastic issue for the consumer. So, a product that is not packaged sustainably will therefore not be perceived as such. An obstacle that brands find is knowing how to communicate that plastic packaging can be sustainable properly.

An insight gathered in our qualitative interviews indicated that consumers are not educated regarding plastic: "I don't know if they do anything sustainable, what I do know is that all of their products are packaged using plastic." (Innovator segment, Category 3, n°4); "Just the fact that they have to produce millions of plastic bottles a day means they aren't sustainable." (Innovator segment, 2, 3). This indicates that consumers consider all plastic as being equal, without differentiating recyclable VS recycled VS virgin-plastic. Therefore, communicating the differences is essential to understand that a product packaged in plastic can be sustainable. To properly communicate sustainability, brands must tackle the plastic issue – being transparent with the efforts they have been doing, and open on what still needs to be done. This report aims to understand how Garnier can communicate that plastic packaging can be sustainable and give recommendations on how to do so effectively.

2. Why Plastic Packaging?

The beauty and personal care market use many plastic materials in its packaging. In 2017 it 76.8 billion plastic units (Euromonitor 2017). The Beauty and Personal Care Packaging Market can be segmented by Material (Paper, Plastic, Metal or Glass), Packaging Type (Tubes, Sticks, Bottles, Carton, etc.) and Product Type (Hair Care, Skin Care, Deodorant, etc.) However, I focus on plastic packaging for all packaging and product types.

Cosmetic plastic packaging can be classified into two main categories: rigid packaging and flexible packaging (Dube, 2020). Rigid packaging involves bottles, caps, and pots, while

flexible packaging includes shrink films, tubes, cosmetic labels, packets, and sachets (Dube, 2020). Rigid packaging is manufactured from polymers such as High-density polyethylene (HDPE), polypropylene (PP), and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) (Das 2019). In contrast, flexible packaging is made from low-density polyethylene and PET, and it can either be a single or multilayer (Amerplast, n.d.). In the EU, around 30% of plastic waste is recycled (Euro News 2019). Consequently, Beauty and Personal Care packaging has been associated with plastics' detrimental effects on the environment as the production, distribution, and consumption of cosmetic products intensifies (Borunda, 2019). There has been a general shift in this market towards more sustainable products (both ingredients and packaging materials). Therefore, beauty and personal care marketing has shifted from products only; towards emphasizing green, biodegradable, and environmental-friendly products and packaging because consumers globally are taking a keen interest in the planet's sustainability (Butler 2018).

Why do brands, despite the known effects of using plastic packaging on the environment and consequently the negative consumer perceptions associated with that, continue to use them? To begin with, beauty and personal care products are perishable goods (Hubbard 2016). The packaging makes the difference in preserving the product, and plastics have proven themselves useful in delivering suitable packaging amidst transport, distribution, and storage concerns (Pierce 2015). Plastics have various qualities that make them well-suited for packaging beauty and personal care products. First, PET, PP, Polyvinylchloride (PVC), and polystyrene (PS), the raw materials used in the manufacture of packaging, are readily available, cheap, exhibit good mechanical performance, and are sealable by heat (ALPPM, n.d.). These materials are suitable barriers to gases and aroma compounds that may harm the

cosmetic product (BPF, n.d.). For this reason, the stakeholders in the mass market beauty industry are torn between championing mainstream environmental sustainability and continuing the use of plastics (Borunda, 2019).

3. The increasing commitments towards more sustainable packaging

As consumers gravitate towards organic and natural products, mass beauty brands develop effective environmental policies to keep up with the sustainability trend, including tackling the plastic issue (Goldberg, 2020). Glass, aluminum, bioplastics, and composite carbon paper are readily available alternatives to plastics. For instance, L'Oréal launched its first paper-based bottle in 2020 (L'Oreal, n.d.). It has also invested in a biotech startup – Carbios - developing plastic recycling technologies (L'Oreal Finance, 2019). Unilever has pledged to halve its use of virgin plastics in packaging by 2025 (Unilever 2019). P&G announced its *Ambition 2030* of sustainability in 2019. They promised to reduce their use of virgin plastic by 50% in their packaging and make all of their packaging, either reusable or recyclable (Procter and Gamble, n.d.). P&G partnered with TerraCycle and SUEZ to produce recyclable shampoo bottles from plastic found on beaches (Suez, 2017). It is evident from these beauty brands that sustainable packaging through bioplastics, biodegradable plastics, refillable packaging, and recyclable packaging is now more-than-ever increasing.

4. Emerging packaging trends

Plastic packaging has been continuously evolving throughout the years. In fact, in 2019, the industry was worth globally over \$234.14 billion, having an expected compound annual growth rate of 4% for the following five years (Grand View Research, 2019). The main trends in the packaging industry are:

E-commerce: In 2020, with the Covid-19, e-commerce has grown exponentially – with retail websites having reached over 22 billion visits just in June, when in January 2020, 16.07 billion visits were made (Statista, 2020). Companies have been redesigning their packaging to be suitable for online shipments (Mckisney, 2020). More efforts are also made to connect the physical package to the virtual world (Whitehouse, 2019) through QR codes.

Hygiene concerns: Due to the pandemic we are currently living in, consumers have developed hygiene consciousness regarding what arrives on their doorstep (Mckinsey, 2020). Brands are implementing and communicating extra-steps that make their products safe and more hygienically packaged (Packaging Digest, 2020).

Plastic-Free: With growing concerns regarding the harmful effects plastic packaging might have on the environment, brands are reinventing themselves and coming out with products that are either plastic-free or packaged in recycled plastic (Whitehouse, 2020). Major brands have embarked on this trend as released solid versions of their products, which require no plastic packaging. An example of this is the Ultra Suave solid shampoo, launched in 2020 (Circular, 2020).

5. How Garnier packages its products

Garnier launched its Green Beauty Campaign. One of its commitments is towards tackling the plastic issue where the brand pledges to be 100% virgin plastic-free by 2025 (Garnier PT, n.d.). Garnier packages most of its products using PET, PP, and PE plastics (Garnier PT, n.d.). PET, or Polyethylene Terephthalate, is the most extensively recycled plastic, most commonly used for clear bottles (Sustainability Guide, 2018). PP, or Polypropylene, is usually also recyclable plastic – however, not all countries and locations do so (Sustainability Guide, 2018). In Portugal, this plastic is recyclable in most places (Recuperados de Plástico,

n.d.). PE, or Polyethylene, usually comes in one of two forms: Low-Density Polyethylene (LDPE) – a flexible material - or High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE) – a rigid material -, both of which are recyclable (Sustainability Guide, 2018). Garnier uses these materials, as they are capable of being recycled and reused several times (Garnier PT, n.d.). In addition to this, Garnier focuses its strategy towards more sustainable packaging in 4 main pillars (Garnier PT, n.d.):

Innovations: Garnier wants to bring to the market innovative products that lessen the environmental impact of plastic use, such as the Ultra Suave solid shampoo launched in 2020 or the first mass-market paper-based tube produced for Garnier Bio.

Existing Products: Garnier means to utilize the plastic that has already been sourced and used to create new packaging. PCR plastic, or Post-Consumer Recycled plastic, has been recycled and reformulated towards a new product.

Payoff: 3670 tons of virgin plastic was saved due to Garnier's use of PCR plastic. This number is expected to grow as Garnier's use of virgin plastic is lessened.

Community: Garnier has established several partnerships to recover and recycle plastic, such as Plastics for Change, Ocean Conservancy, and others.

Despite the majority of packaging used by Garnier being recyclable, there are a few exceptions: in regards to shampoo or conditioner, the bottles themselves are recyclable, but the caps are not; in terms of deo products, the bottles are recyclable, but the spray cans are not; the bottles of face wash are recyclable, but not their caps; hairspray cans are recyclable; and finally, the shaving cream bottles and cans are recyclable, but the tubes are not (Garnier USA, n.d.).

5.1. Green Beauty Plastic Commitment

Garnier is committed to becoming virgin-plastic-free. To do so, Garnier has partnered with CARBIOS – a company that reinvents polymers lifecycle (Carbios FR, n.d.) – intending to reinvent plastic recycling. Each plastic package comprises a mixture of more than one type of plastic, and CARBIOS developed an innovative technique that breaks down these polymers back into monomers. In turn, these can be worked again and used to create other plastic polymers – thus making the need for virgin plastic obsolete (Carbios FR, n.d.; Garnier UK, n.d.). This campaign was meant to "transform the way we do business," Adrien Koskas (Global Cosmetic News, 2020). Garnier demonstrated their willingness to work towards a more sustainable environment, being transparent and communicating what still had to be done (Think Marketing, 2020)

6. Communication Strategy

Garnier should develop a strategy dedicated to communicating the plastic issue. The objective would be to educate consumers regarding the different plastics, recycling and teach how to be sustainable when using a plastic package. To do so, Garnier would need to be transparent, evident in their message, call to action their consumers, and be honest regarding what still needs to be done. Garnier would communicate its message using social media, activation campaigns, and video campaigns to achieve this. A mix of all these mediums would ensure that the consumer would have all relevant information regarding plastics readily available.

However, there is a danger when it comes to communicating about sustainability: greenwashing. Greenwashing is when a brand misleads its audience by making green claims that are not true or relevant. Greenwashing has necessitated that brands prove their

commitment to sustainable practices so that the consumer trusts the brand. Additionally, greenwashing has also created fear amongst sustainable brands, as they do not wish to be accused of this. This fear creates a hard-to-break cycle: the brands do not communicate their sustainability efforts as they are scared of being accused of greenwashing; which makes the consumer not aware that a brand might be sustainable; which makes the brand to be perceived in a negative light; which exponents even further the fear of a brand to be accused of another negative thing (such as greenwashing).

6.1 Recommendations

Considering Garnier's efforts towards creating a more sustainable future, and taking into account the results that these commitments have had in the environment; one asks the question: Do Portuguese Consumers consider Garnier to be a sustainable brand? According to our questionnaire, only 51.21% of respondents said yes. For a brand to be known as sustainable; it is not enough to be sustainable; it has to be perceived as such. In the following subchapters, recommendations are presented so that Garnier can more effectively communicate that their use of plastic is sustainable.

6.1.1. Be transparent

Social media is a powerful communication tool. It is also one that enables consumers to interact quickly and efficiently with brands. In 2020, an estimated 6.92 million Portuguese population had a social media presence (Statista, 2020). In Portugal, 63% of the population aged 16 to 64 are present on social media (Kemp, 2020). This indicates that a communication strategy focused on social media is vital as Garnier's primary target audience reside within two age intervals: 16-24 years old and 25-34 years old (Garnier Briefing).

Garnier Portugal can utilize its Instagram account with 76.3 thousand followers to have open communication with its consumers. In this platform, **Garnier should host an AMA:** An

AMA, or ask me anything, is an opportunity for consumers to present questions to Garnier about whatever they please. Garnier should advertise this event as a Sustainability AMA, where consumers can ask questions about anything sustainable. Creating these sorts of posts increases the brands' transparency as the customers see their questions truthfully answered. This way, not only the customer benefits from this experience, but it is also a chance for Garnier to understand what indeed concerns the customer.

6.1.2. Educate and Inform

In our quantitative questionnaire, 92.8% of respondents stated that "Brand should educate consumers on how to recycle their products"; as well as 95.3% agreeing with "Brand should communicate their sustainability efforts to consumers." This education can take various forms and through many different channels.

Regarding Instagram, Garnier should **add highlights about plastic and recycling**: Instagram has an available feature where the account manager can add highlights to the profile, making the information readily available to those who wish to look for it. Currently, Garnier has a dedicated highlight to the Green Beauty Campaign. However, there is no mention of the efforts made towards fighting plastic pollution. A highlight with this subject would encompass not only what Garnier has been doing towards reducing plastic use but also how the consumer could recycle it. In addition to this, Garnier should **share a tutorial on IGTV**. This section is within the Instagram app, where users can share high-quality videos with up to 60 minutes of content. Garnier could leverage this and post a "How to recycle" tutorial. Here, Garnier would show how consumers should recycle each of their products, in what containers to put them in, and how to prepare the product to be ready for starting the recycling process.

Garnier should also create a video campaign showcasing how one bottle can have many lives: **"One bottle, many lives"** - the video would start with a young woman shampooing her hair with a Fructis product. As she puts the shampoo down, it turns into a Narta deodorant, with a different person applying it to their body. As she puts down the deo, it would become an Ambre Solaire sunscreen, with mothers slathering it on their children. Then, as she put the product back in her purse, it would become a Garnier Bio face cream, with another person applying it to their face. And finally, as the product was being placed in the nightstand, it would turn into an Ultra Suave shampoo being set in a supermarket shelf. The video would end with the sentence: "One Bottle, Many lives. Recycle your plastic packaging". In addition to informing regarding the power of recycling, this video would also serve as a call to action, the next recommendation.

6.1.3. Call to action

Garnier should encourage consumers to act more sustainably. Being informed is essential; however, the brand must invite the consumer to act accordingly. Garnier can create a "Reuse" challenge in its Instagram account: One of the three Rs of sustainable living. The reuse challenge would task consumers to alter an empty Garnier product to repurpose it towards something else. Garnier should post the challenge giving an example of what can be done (Ex. Turn a shampoo bottle into a flower vase). This would promote customer engagement while reinforcing the idea that plastics can be reused and turned into something new. The challenge would be accompanied by a hashtag (#ReusePlasticWithGarnier), and the winner would be the post with the most likes. They would receive the Garnier Bio Repairing Hemp cream, which is packaged within a paper-based tube. To promote the challenge, Garnier would partner with influencers focused on sustainability. For example, Catarina Barreiros (64.9 thousand followers) would post the challenge on their instastories.

Additionally, Garnier could promote a year-long campaign focused on consumer action, inviting the consumer to "Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle." Wanting to communicate that plastic packaging can be sustainable, Garnier must call consumers to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Each of these events would occur separately, however, be communicated as being part of the same campaign. This way, consumers would understand the full-cycle of sustainable living and be encouraged to make more sustainable choices.

Reduce - Most of the qualitative interview respondents stated to purchase more than one product of each category. For example, on average, respondents varied between two or three shampoos having them available always. Garnier should launch the **Reduce** campaign, where consumers were helped to develop their perfect routine. Being Hair Care the most valuable Garnier segment (Garnier Briefing), this activation campaign would help consumers create their ideal hair care routine. Garnier should create a kiosk in 5 of the biggest shopping malls in Portugal: Colombo in Lisbon, Norte Shopping in Porto, Mar Shopping in Faro, Almada Forum in Setubal UBBO in Lisbon. In this kiosk, hair care specialists would evaluate the consumers' hair: texture, customers goals, and preferences; and create a recommended hair routine, which would include a shampoo, a conditioner, a mask, and a styling product. The campaign would be advertised on social media with the slogan "**From plenty to four**"; indicating that a consumer could reduce the number of products bought to meet their hair needs.

Reuse – Garnier would launch a Pop-up refill store. This store would be temporary, being open for June 2021, as the European Sustainable Development Week happens in this period. The store would sell the most purchased Garnier Products in bulk, focusing on Hair Care and Skin Care. Consumers would be invited to bring their container, and if they did so, the

product would be sold at a reduced price. This would incentivize consumers to reuse empty containers at home. In case consumers didn't bring a container, empty and clear plastic containers (made from PCR plastic) would be available to sell. These containers would be clear, resistant so that the consumer could reuse them as they please. The pop-up store would be located in LX Factory in Lisbon, as it is considered trendy by the Portuguese population (Turista Professional, n.d.).

Recycle - Garnier would launch a sustainable vending machine. The brand would place the machine in two supermarkets: Colombo in Lisbon and Norte Shopping in Porto. This vending machine would be double-sided and have a touch screen. On one side, consumers would deposit empty plastic recyclable bottles, click on the screen which product they would wish to receive, and it would be given to the consumer for free. This is a visual and impactful way for the consumer to perceive that recycling a product means a new one gets made. The machine would, therefore, accept plastic waste as payment for a new product. This campaign would last only one day; however, it would be heavily communicated on social media beforehand. In addition to this, images would be captured throughout the day to create content for Garnier's social media platforms.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Kiosk design example for the Reduce campaign



Appendix 2: Pop-up design example for the Reuse campaign



Appendix 3: Vending machine design example for the Recycle campaign

